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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*The Aeneid of Virgil Translated into English Verse.* By THEODORE C. WILLIAMS. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910. (The Riverside Literature Series.) Pp. xxiii+503. \$0.75.

The publishers have performed a real service for American education by reissuing in inexpensive form the latest and best American translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. It is well to have such a book within reach, not only of every school library and every teacher, but also of every student of Latin, and even more of every student so unlucky as not to take Latin. Like all the publications of this firm, the volume is beautifully printed, from the same plates as the first edition (1908), from which it differs in the size and quality of its paper, in its cheaper binding, in the new Introduction—better suited to the schoolboy than the admirable original one—and in the addition of illustrations and notes which enhance its attractiveness and usefulness as a school book.

Why another attempt at translating Virgil, and another attempt in blank-verse? I confess to a prejudice against verse-translations in general and against blank-verse in particular, due chiefly to the fact that such radical change in metrical form carries one wholly out of the atmosphere of the original, and that blank-verse needs such a master-hand that it has rarely with real success been employed by translators. We are not likely to have a Milton, a Keats, a Shelley, or a Tennyson turning his hand to the laborious task of translating a long poem. Bryant's *Homer*, a recognized American classic, is a respectable—that is to say, mediocre—performance, giving, for all its fidelity, a poorer idea of the Greek even than Pope's brilliant paraphrase. If one must get at great poetry through the unsatisfactory medium of translation—we are often tempted to say in despair—commend us to such prose as that of Mr. Andrew Lang! Yet, in spite of this prejudice, as I have read this latest attempt at the impossible I have found myself kindling into a real enthusiasm for Mr. Williams' achievement.

Matthew Arnold said of blank-verse that in order to pour Homer into the mold of this meter the translator will have entirely to break him up and melt him down, with the hope of then successfully composing him afresh; and this is a process which is full of risks. "The result of such an attempt to renovate the old poet may be an Aeson; but it may also and more probably will be a Pelias." This process Mr. Williams seems to have followed with Virgil, and with surprising success. The new Virgil that issues from his alembic not only is fair and vigorous, but also bears a real resemblance to his former self, in spite of the perilous sea-change he has suffered in passing from his native element, the Latin hexameter, into the entirely different element of English blank-verse. In short, this version is the most Virgilian of all the versions: as a representation of the Latin it is sufficiently faithful and correct; and as an English poem it has the high Virgilian qualities of grace and sweetness, tenderness and deep feeling, and—to some extent, at least—stateliness and dignity. It has a really epic quality that should give to those who are so unhappy as not to know the original something, at any rate—a good deal, perhaps—of the almost indefinable

and incomunicable charm of the world's best-beloved poet. Mr. Williams has caught the trick of the grand style, which seems, after all, no trick, but natural enough to him; he has the art of saying simple things in a noble and dignified way without sacrificing simplicity. It is rare that his diction seems mannered or forced, and rarer still that it falls below the level of poetry, though so long a task must of course have its inequalities, and so large a body of blank-verse must needs have—what the Virgilian hexameter never has—its lapses into monotony. His blank-verse has often a Miltonic ring, and has it naturally, unlike Cowper's labored imitation of Milton's manner; and the effect is admirable, for after all it is Milton rather than Tennyson who is the most Virgilian of English poets. To do Mr. Williams justice it would be necessary to give specimens of his version at some length, and for that there is no space here; no brief citation can give any adequate idea of the high merit of his work as a whole. What space remains must be given to the ungrateful task of pointing out certain defects.

It is indeed unfortunate that a work of such excellence should be marred by faults which might easily have been avoided, and doubly unfortunate that some of these were not amended before the book was reprinted. There is time for only a few typical cases out of scores that might be cited. Mr. Williams is by no means entirely free from the very sins of which he accuses Dryden and Fairfax Taylor—mannerism and redundancy. Actual mistranslation, while not impossible to find, is rare, but frequent “padding” gives almost the same impression of lack of fidelity, and this offense is sometimes augmented by an unhappy mannerism. Many instances might be given of such liberties as the rendering of *se*, one little word, by “her own fair shape” (xi. 779) or “his great heart” (xii. 234). *Ab uno discere omnes!* How weak is the amplification, “Fling away thy glorious sword, mine offspring and mine heir,” for that tremendous half-line (vi. 835) which so eloquently suggests the concentrated horror and indignation of the poet at the crime of civil war—*proice tela manu, sanguis meus!* Lapses from good taste and epic dignity, though few, are sometimes shocking enough: such unlucky expressions, for instance, as “makes off” (p. 407), “seafarers’ kit” (p. 97), “warmed to its work” (p. 355), “cuddle into camp” (p. 293), “Make of me your swords’ first work” (p. 313), “himself the sticking-point and tug of war” (p. 348), “Will not this shaft a good bit deeper drive?” (p. 350), “With our own eyes we picked out a good place to steal a march” (p. 302), “to carve the wound out with a sword, to rip the clinging weapon forth” (p. 435), “Trojan-born Aeneas having come, Dido, the lovely widow, looked his way” (p. 118), and the abominable word *drool* (p. 104). There is no space to point out metrical defects (I have noted, for example, seven octosyllabic lines and, as if to make up for these, as many Alexandrines) or slips in grammar, which are by no means few (on pp. 404 f. an eagle changes its gender!). On pp. 85 and 309 *ere* is misprinted for *e'er* (vice versa on p. 303), on p. 408 *sight* for *sighs*, on p. 99 *lives*, apparently, for *limbs* (*artus*), on p. 104 *Ithaca* for *Ithacus*, and on p. 428 *streaming steeds* probably for *steaming* (*fumantia*). There are also errors and inconsistencies of pronunciation, the worst of which is the accent of *Benacus* in the index of proper names as well as in the text (Mr. Williams is probably not responsible for the index, which contains other curious things): “Lake Benacus, the river’s source and sire” (*quos patre Benaco velatus arundine glauca*, x. 205). How could the translator have forgotten the great line, *fluctibus et fremitu ad-*

*surgens Benace marino*, and the great passage in which it occurs? On p. 431 we have *Iapyx* mispronounced with the accent on the antepenult, but on the very next page rightly pronounced with the penult long; here again the index is at fault. But for blemishes like these, this version might be pronounced without hesitation the most satisfactory—or must we rather say, least unsatisfactory—of all English renderings of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

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*The Training of Teachers for Secondary Schools in Germany and the United States.* By JOHN FRANKLIN BROWN. New York: Macmillan, 1911. Pp. x+335. \$1.25 net.

There is much reference to German practice in the discussion of American school affairs, so that any work which gives a clear, consecutive statement of what the older country is doing is an important addition to pedagogical literature. In this book there is added to this contribution an analysis of our own problem in training teachers, with suggestions of the next steps we may well take, and of the part the German plan may play in this reconstruction.

About two-thirds of the space is given to "The Training of German Teachers" and the remainder to "The Training of American Teachers." The former section begins with an account of Prussian schools and traces the development from 1810 to the present. We have nowhere else so adequate a statement of the various forms of the *Seminar* in connection with the university and in other relationships. There is an impartial showing of the state of opinion in Germany with reference to the study of education in the university and the *Seminarjahr* and the *Probejahr*.

The division relating to America is less satisfactory, in part no doubt owing to the less satisfactory condition of training in this country. There is an excellent statement of standards of certification and qualifications of secondary-school teachers in the various states. Then follows an account of what is being done in normal schools and colleges. The report of the Committee of Seventeen is given, and on the basis of what this proposes and the suggestions coming from the German system there is stated "a plan for providing for the desired training." This is summarized by the author (p. 278) as follows:

"1. A five-year course of combined academic and professional training following the completion of a good four-year preparatory course.

"2. Such study of two or three subjects as will give the candidate scholarship sufficient to teach them effectively in the high school.

"3. Such study of other subjects as will give him a broad outlook upon other departments of scholarship and upon life.

"4. At least an elementary study, during the third and fourth years of the college course, of the history of education, educational psychology, the principles of education, secondary education, and observation of actual teaching.

"5. One year of graduate study (which might well be called the professional year), in which he shall divide his time between actual teaching under careful supervision and additional theoretical professional study, the former to be regarded as fundamentally important.